

Concept D

Executive Summary

Introduction

Concepts

Conclusion

Concept D

Concept D

[Executive Summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Concepts](#)[Conclusion](#)

Concept D: True North - Orienting Layers of Time, Space and Activity at Denver Union Station

Jana Davis, Ryan Poole, Avant Ramsey, Darcy Varney

Hidden all around Denver's Union Station is a rich history, replete with tales of commerce, growth and civic pride. Our concept plan exposes the most powerful of these historic references, the true north axis, and raises it to prominence on the site. The true north axis functions here as a historical datum line, providing a linear reference that differentiates and defines all of the elements of the design. Honoring Denver's connection to its northern neighbor, Cheyenne, Wyoming, the axis references the direction of the first railroad shipments from Union Station and celebrates the subsequent growth of the region. The datum line exposes and orients layers of time, space and activity throughout the site.

Layers of time honor the historical significance of Denver Union Station and its meaning to the city's residents, and inspire new connections to the emerging public places. **Layers of space** build into the site a flexible, sustainable environment

Concept D

[Executive Summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Concepts](#)[Conclusion](#)

that improves connections among all transportation modes at Union Station and stimulates economic vitality. **Layers of activity** create an exciting setting and invite people to experience Union Station in a variety of ways whenever they visit.

The **north axis** is built into the south plaza area, outlined on the diagonal with recycled box car planters filled with native grasses. Lighted pavers illuminate the planters and create a visual line along the axis through the **historic building**, inside of which a post office, coffee shop, restaurant, card shop, internet café, offices, and RTD and Amtrak traveler services activate the space and invite daily use throughout the year. A **glass atrium** connects the **north wing building** to the historic building, preserving and increasing use around and appreciation of the historic building's north façade. The north wing building features a second-story terrace seating and viewing area that provides access to the 17th Street Promenade and the historic building.

The **south wing building**, which abuts Wynkoop Street and invites exploration into the plaza, features a 20,000 sq. ft. neighborhood grocery store; second- and

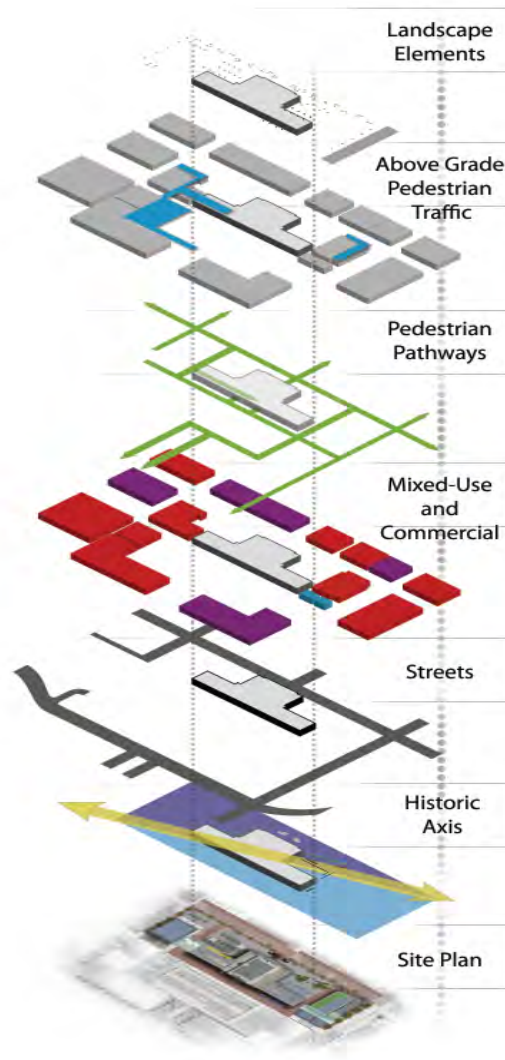
Concept D

Executive Summary

Introduction

Concepts

Conclusion



third-story terraces for public and private use; and two buildings to the west that house a bicycle shop and bicycle commuter station, with bike parking and locker facilities. A 30-foot-wide sky-lighted arcade provides direct access through the south building from 16th Street to the **west plaza area**, bus concourse and trains.

The **south plaza area** facilitates the movement of pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the transportation hub, while the **north plaza area** invites relaxation and rest, with moveable seating, “green screen” shade structures and points of interest, including a light-based interactive installation on three moveable screens. Wynkoop Street provides a pedestrian buffer, with parking on both sides and lighted limestone bollards that unify the streetscape design with the materials of the historic building. Enclaves of street trees provide shade and natural beauty along the outside edge of the plaza.

A natural meeting place on the site is the **“Welcome Arch Shadow”** – polished granite blocks placed in the footprints of the 1906 arch, with the words “welcome”

Concept D

[Executive Summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Concepts](#)[Conclusion](#)

and “mizpah” set into the paving between the blocks. Each side features two blocks – one for sitting, and one angled to reflect the façade of the historic building.

Plaza management structure and cost estimates: we advocate for a collaborative public-private partnership to manage the plaza, ensuring timely and consistent leasing of retail and office units and active maintenance of the public spaces, while allowing for public oversight and attention to the public good. Some tax-increment financing of the project would be appropriate to ensure public ownership; tax revenue from the businesses on the site will stimulate the Lower Downtown economy and ensure long-term investment in the project.

We estimate total hard costs of the plaza construction at about \$4 million, excluding the wing buildings. This estimate includes paving materials, bollards, trees, street lights, kiosks, shade structures, planters, and public art. Construction of the wing buildings will add between \$5 million and \$10 million to the cost of the project, depending on specific materials used. Additional expenses will include the construction of a storm water

Concept D

[Executive Summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Concepts](#)[Conclusion](#)

mitigation system, partially included in this plan in the form of bio-swales and street trees.

Studying current lease and vacancy rates in Lower Downtown, we estimate that the retail units on the site will rent for \$23.11 per square foot, and that office units will rent for \$32.99 per square foot. Based on precedents from other places, the grocery store chosen for the south building may commit to a long-term lease (10 to 20 years) or buy the space outright, ensuring a long-term anchor for the site.

Our concept provides more square footage of leasable space than called for in the master plan: 81,775 sq. ft. in the south wing buildings; 78,300 sq. ft. in the north wing building; and 6,640 sq. ft. in the glass atrium. Given the amount of square footage of leasable space on the site, it has the potential to generate upwards of \$4,315,400 when fully leased.

Concept D

[Executive Summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Concepts](#)[Conclusion](#)